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## Book Review: One Hundred Years of Old Man Sage: An Arapaho Life

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*One Hundred Years of Old Man Sage: An Arapaho Life.* By Jeffrey D. Anderson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. x + 140 pp. Map, photographs, notes, references, index. \$35.00.

Although biographies have long been a staple in Plains Indian ethnology, this profile of an Arapaho man of renown offers something new, different, and important. Because of their unique position in the unfolding events of frontier expansion, well described in this volume, the Arapahos never received the degree of study afforded other Plains tribes, and this book is redress. Moreover, Anderson's method of reconstructing Sage's life story is particularly inventive.

Sherman Sage (ca. 1843-1944) took part in many of the key events of Plains history. He attended the first and second Fort Laramie treaty talks, witnessed the birth of gold rush Denver, and served as his tribe's envoy to Wovoka, prophet of the Ghost Dance move-

ment. He lost three children and a wife to the ravages of reservation life. Under multiple names, he persisted through it all, as warrior, family man, Indian scout, reservation policeman, and minor headman. Sage's story is thus a personal view of the latter days of the buffalo economy and the changes his society faced with the coming of the whites. Much like the Arapaho in total, Sage adjusted but never gave up his Native identity.

The author avoids a plodding timeline, pursuing instead chapter-length themes like marriage, migration, war, and work. Most interesting is the way Anderson triangulates on Sage. He draws quotes from obscure field notes and publications of Sister Inez Hilger and A. F. C. Greene, finds Sage in the notes and monographs of Alfred Kroeber and James Mooney, and fills in some more from his own interviews with Sage's descendants. Many interesting Arapaho customs are recorded, some common across the Plains, others peculiar to the tribe. One surprise is how much Arapaho raiding and other travel was done on foot (Sage ran from Wyoming to Oklahoma to court his first wife).

Anderson labors to keep a low profile; and though he weighs interpretations when matters are unclear, more basic explanation is sometimes warranted. For instance, young Sage's father warned him that announcing his generosity when sharing his buffalo kill would be like killing the beneficiary's relative. This profound equation epitomizing hunter-gatherer morality could be lost on unguided readers. Nevertheless, this volume would be an outstanding choice as a supplement in Plains Indian college classes, or for anyone wanting an engaging synopsis of Arapaho contact history and cultural values.

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